

Amendments to the Claims

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

Claims 1-27 (canceled).

Claim 28 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane comprising a preformed thermoplastic polyurethane body comprising thermoplastic polyurethane pellets and thermally expandable hydrocarbon-containing microspheres at least substantially encapsulated by a binding agent comprising a polyisocyanate or prepolymer thereof ~~polymeric component~~ having an onset temperature for its melt processing which is lower than the onset temperature for the melt processing of the thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 29 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 28 wherein said polyurethane is the reaction product of difunctional isocyanate with at least one difunctional polyhydroxy compound.

Claim 30 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 28, further comprising an additional blowing agent.

Claim 31 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane obtained by foaming the foamable thermoplastic polyurethane of claim 30.

Claim 32 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 28, wherein the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres contain an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon.

Claim 33 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 28, wherein the thermoplastic polyurethane pellets are made by reacting a difunctional isocyanate composition comprising an aromatic difunctional isocyanate with at least one difunctional polyhydroxy compound.

Claim 34 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 33, wherein the aromatic difunctional isocyanate comprises diphenylmethane diisocyanate.

Claim 35 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 34, wherein the diphenylmethane diisocyanate comprises at least 80% by weight of 4,4'-diphenylmethane diisocyanate.

Claim 36 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 33, wherein the difunctional polyhydroxy compound comprises a polyoxyalkylene diol or polyester diol.

Claim 37 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 36, wherein the polyoxyalkylene diol comprises oxyethylene groups.

Claim 38 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 37, wherein the polyoxyalkylene diol is a poly(oxyethylene-oxypropylene diol).

Claim 39 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 28, wherein the amount of the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres is between 0.5 and 4.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 40 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 39, wherein the amount of the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres is between 1.0 and 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 41 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 30, wherein the blowing agent is an endothermic blowing agent.

Claim 42 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 41, wherein the endothermic blowing agent comprises bicarbonates or citrates.

Claim 43 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 30, wherein the blowing agent is an exothermic blowing agent.

Claim 44 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 43, wherein the exothermic blowing agent comprises azodicarbonamide type compounds.

Claim 45 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 30, wherein the amount of the blowing agent is between 0.5 and 4.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 46 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 45, wherein the amount of the blowing agent is between 1.0 and 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 47 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 which is carried out by injection molding.

Claim 48 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 which is carried out in a pressurized mold.

Claim 49 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 having a density not more than 700 kg/m^3 .

Claim 50 (previously presented). Foamed thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 31 having a density of not more than 600 kg/m^3 .

Claim 51 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane comprising a thermoplastic polyurethane and thermally expandable hydrocarbon-containing microspheres wherein the thermoplastic polyurethane is present as a pre-formed thermoplastic polyurethane body comprising thermoplastic polyurethane pellets and wherein the thermally expandable hydrocarbon-containing microspheres are at least substantially encapsulated by a binding agent comprising a polyisocyanate or prepolymer thereof ~~polymeric component~~ having an onset temperature for melt processing which is lower than the onset temperature for the melt processing of the thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 52 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 51, wherein the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres contain an aliphatic or cycloaliphatic hydrocarbon.

Claim 53 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 51, wherein the thermoplastic polyurethane is made by reacting a difunctional isocyanate composition comprising an aromatic difunctional isocyanate with at least one difunctional polyhydroxy compound.

Claim 54 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 53, wherein the aromatic difunctional isocyanate comprises diphenylmethane diisocyanate.

Claim 55 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 54, wherein the diphenylmethane diisocyanate comprises at least 80% by weight of 4,4'-diphenylmethane diisocyanate.

Claim 56 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 53, wherein the difunctional polyhydroxy compound comprises a polyoxyalkylene diol or polyester diol.

Claim 57 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 56, wherein the polyoxyalkylene diol comprises oxyethylene groups.

Claim 58 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 57, wherein the polyoxyalkylene diol is a poly(oxyethylene-oxypropylene diol).

Claim 59 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 51, wherein the amount of the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres is between 0.5 and 4.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 60 (previously presented). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane according to claim 59, wherein the amount of the hydrocarbon-containing microspheres is between 1.0 and 3.0 parts by weight per 100 parts by weight of thermoplastic polyurethane.

Claim 61 (currently amended). Foamable thermoplastic polyurethane comprising thermoplastic polyurethane pellets, thermally expandable microspheres and a binding agent comprising a polyisocyanate or prepolymer thereof ~~polymeric component~~ binding the polyurethane pellets and the microspheres.